



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

# Public Health

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January 22, 2008

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *J. Fielding*  
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA)**

On October 23, 2007, the Board approved a motion by Supervisors Burke and Antonovich which instructed the Chief Executive Officer to work in concert with the Director of Public Health to 1) immediately assess the public health threat posed by Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA), and advise the Board on any additional actions or resources that could be helpful in responding to this rising health problem; and 2) report back to the Board in three weeks on the actions taken on this matter. On November 13, 2007, I provided you with a report assessing the threat of MRSA, actions we have already taken to address the threat, and action we planned to take. This report details the actions we have taken since our last report and our plans for future activities.

## ACTIONS COMPLETED

In our report of November 13, 2007, we committed to distributing guidelines and health education materials to community organizations, including schools, daycare centers, gyms, and other recreation centers. Since that report, we have provided guidance to the Los Angeles Police Department and County Emergency Medical Services regarding their infection control guidelines to protect first response personnel from acquiring MRSA. In December, in response to a Board motion by Supervisor Antonovich regarding handwashing, we provided the Internal Services Department (ISD) with printed materials to promote handwashing in restrooms in all buildings where Los Angeles County (LAC) business is conducted.

We are committed to working with schools in the control and prevention of this organism. Since our last report to you, Department of Public Health (DPH) staff have made presentations about community associated MRSA (CAMRSA) to Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) communicable disease control nurses and Los Angeles County Office of Education nurse managers. We serve as a resource to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and LAUSD in development of CAMRSA guidelines for schools and athletic teams. Our guidelines have been distributed to school districts throughout LAC. We have also answered numerous questions from school principals and nurses throughout LAC on several issues regarding CAMRSA such as the non-necessity of classroom disinfection and concerns regarding parental notification or reporting to DPH. DPH staff have investigated several complaints of CAMRSA in schools but there has been no evidence of transmission or outbreaks in LAC schools.

## **FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

MRSA educational materials are being reviewed at this time with input from outside experts and affected groups. Once these documents are finalized, they will be distributed within three months to several target audiences, including homeless services organizations, other community-based organizations, and health clubs. A separate document will be prepared for public workers, including County employers and employees.

The CDPH is considering ways of tracking CAMRSA infections at the state level. Legislation has recently been proposed to make MRSA a reportable disease in California. Staff from DPH are following these proposals closely and have provided information to State staff on request.

The California Healthcare Associated Infection Advisory Committee (HAIAC) was chartered by SB 739 in 2006. A DPH medical epidemiologist was appointed to HAIAC to represent a local public health department. A subcommittee of the HAIAC is drafting a recommendation on the best way to monitor healthcare associated MRSA infections; the HAIAC's recommendation will be presented to the CDPH for consideration.

Last fall, we requested two new positions in DPH's Acute Communicable Disease Control Program to address surveillance and control of MRSA and other drug-resistant infectious organisms. This unmet needs request is under review by the CEO as part of the FY 08-09 DPH budget preparation process.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

JEF:eb  
PH:710:007(2)

c: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors